

Remarks

Claims 2-7 and 11-13 have been amended.

The Examiner has rejected applicant's claims 2, 3, 5-7 and 11-14 under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over the Fawcett, et al. patent (US Patent No. 5,678,002) taken in view of the Phung, et al. reference (US Published Patent Application No. 2002/0007237). The Examiner has also rejected applicant's claim 4 under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over the Fawcett, et al. patent in view of the Skaaning, et al. patent (US Patent No. 6,535,865). With respect to applicant's claims, as amended, the Examiner's rejections are respectfully traversed.

Applicant's added independent claims 11-13 have been amended to better define applicant's invention. More particularly, applicant's independent claim 11 recites a trouble management system comprising: first receiving means for receiving, through a network, from a customer apparatus connected to a printer, trouble information of a trouble occurring in the printer; determining means for determining whether or not an inquiry is necessary, based on the contents of the trouble information received by said first receiving means; first transmitting means for transmitting the inquiry item relating to the printer, which inquiry item is based on the trouble information received by said first receiving means, to said customer apparatus, if said determining means determines that the inquiry is necessary; second receiving means for receiving, from said customer apparatus, a response which is input to said customer apparatus on the basis of the inquiry item transmitted by said first transmitting means; diagnosing means for diagnosing the trouble occurring in the printer, in accordance with the response received by said second receiving means; and second transmitting means for selectively transmitting a message indicating how to deal with the trouble and a request of repair of the printer respectively to said

customer apparatus and a person in charge of the repair in accordance with a result of the diagnosis by said diagnosing means. Claims 12 and 13 have been similarly amended.

Applicant's independent claims now clearly recite that in the trouble management system of the present invention trouble information of trouble occurring in a printer is received through a network from a customer apparatus. Based on the received trouble information (e.g., S208 and S209) an inquiry item about the printer is transmitted (e.g., S212) to the customer apparatus to which a printer is connected. A diagnosis of the trouble is made (e.g., S218) in accordance with a response to the inquiry item received from the customer apparatus, so that a message indicating how to deal with the trouble and a request of repair of the printer are selectively transmitted (e.g., S219 and S307) respectively to the customer apparatus and a person in charge of the repair in accordance with a result of the diagnosis of the trouble.

Such a construction is not taught or suggested by the cited Fawcett, et al., Phung, et al. and Skaanning, et al. references. In particular, the Examiner argues that "Fawcett et al disclose . . . first receiving means for receiving, through a network (i.e., common network protocol for passing data, column 4, lines 3-5), from a customer apparatus connected to a printer, trouble information of the printer (i.e., communications path established between the customer and the PSS, column 6, lines 4-9, wherein a remote diagnostic agent 50 on the customer computer 40 can execute a resident diagnostic application and query, receive and update information about an attached printer, column 10, lines 28-32); first determining means for determining whether or not an inquiry is necessary, based on the contents of trouble information received by said first receiving means (i.e., customer is asked a series of questions and product support center computer asks the customer's computer to transmit certain background/diagnostic information

that may be relevant to the problem, column 1, lines 50-59) . . . transmitting means for transmitting the inquiry item relating to the printer to said customer apparatus (i.e., PSS 38 can command remote diagnostic agent to query, receive and update information about the printer, column 10, lines 35-38), if said first determining means determines that the inquiry is necessary (i.e., after review the product support engineer can query the customer's computer/printer for additional information, column 2, lines 3-5) . . . diagnosing means for diagnosing the printer, in accordance with the response received by said second receiving means (i.e., diagnostic application, column 10, lines 28-30)."

In the Examiner's above arguments, the Examiner has equated applicant's claimed determining means to the Fawcett, et al. patent teaching of a "customer is asked a series of questions and product support center computer asks the customer's computer to transmit certain background/diagnostic information that may be relevant to the problem" and applicant's first receiving means to the Fawcett, et al. patent teaching of a "communications path established between the customer and the PSS, column 6, lines 4-9, wherein a remote diagnostic agent 50 on the customer computer 40 can execute a resident diagnostic application and query, receive and update information about an attached printer." However, in the Fawcett, et al. patent the customer is asked the questions first and the "PSS computer then automatically interrogates the customer computer to obtain relevant printer information based on the customer's responses and the Printer Properties Diagnostic described above." Column 15, lines 14-29.

Thus, in the Fawcett, et al. system, there is no teaching or suggestion of a first receiving means for receiving, through a network, from a customer apparatus connected to a printer, trouble information of a trouble occurring in the printer. In the Fawcett, et al. system, as above-

indicated, the first information is from the customer, not from the customer apparatus connected to a printer.

Furthermore, as acknowledged by the Examiner, the diagnostic agent 50 is at the customer computer and while it returns results to the PSS, there is no teaching or suggestion in the Fawcett, et al. patent that the PSS receive through a network from a customer apparatus connected to a printer, trouble information occurring at the printer, and that the PSS then conduct a determining of whether or not an inquiry is necessary based on the contents of the trouble information received. As above-indicated, in the Fawcett, et al. patent, the first information is from the customer, not from the customer apparatus connected to a printer, and the information received from the diagnostic agent 50 in response to the PSS computer is not taught as being used in the PSS in determining whether or not an inquiry is necessary, based on the contents of the trouble information received by the PSS from a customer apparatus connected to a printer.

It follows, therefore, that the Fawcett, et al. patent cannot teach or suggest “first transmitting means for transmitting the inquiry item relating to the printer, which inquiry item is based on the trouble information received by said first receiving means, to said customer apparatus, if said determining means determines that the inquiry is necessary; second receiving means for receiving, from said customer apparatus, a response which is input to said customer apparatus on the basis of the inquiry item transmitted by said transmitting means; diagnosing means for diagnosing the trouble occurring in the printer, in accordance with the response received by said second receiving means.”

Finally, there is clearly no teaching or suggestion in the Fawcett, et al. patent of “second

transmitting means for selectively transmitting a message indicating how to deal with the trouble and a request of repair of the printer respectively to said customer apparatus and a person in charge of the repair in accordance with a result of the diagnosis by said diagnosing means.”

There is no discussion in the Fawcett, et al. patent of selectively transmitting a message of how to deal with the trouble and a request of repair of the printer to the customer apparatus and the person in charge of repair, respectively.

The Fawcett, et al. patent, therefore, clearly does not teach or suggest the features of applicant's amended claims 11-13, and their respective dependent claims. Moreover, the Examiner states that “Phung et al disclose a data collection 50 in order to determine diagnostic data from system 400 (¶ 0052), and a call routine invoked to get diagnostic data from the vehicle system (i. e., receiving from said customer apparatus, a response, ¶ 0052). However, these teachings of the Phung, et al. reference would not lead in the Fawcett, et al. patent to the PSS first receiving through a network from a customer apparatus connected to a printer, trouble information occurring in the printer, and the PSS then conducting a first determining of whether or not an inquiry is necessary based on the contents of the trouble information.

Moreover, the Phung, et al. reference, like the Fawcett, et al. patent, is devoid of any teaching or suggestion of a “first transmitting means for transmitting the inquiry item relating to the printer, which inquiry item is based on the trouble information received by said first receiving means, to said customer apparatus, if said determining means determines that the inquiry is necessary; second receiving means for receiving, from said customer apparatus, a response which is input to said customer apparatus on the basis of the inquiry item transmitted by said transmitting means; diagnosing means for diagnosing the trouble occurring in the printer,

in accordance with the response received by said second receiving means." Finally, there is no teaching or suggestion in this reference of "second transmitting means for selectively transmitting a message indicating how to deal with the trouble and a request of repair of the printer respectively to said customer apparatus and a person in charge of the repair in accordance with a result of the diagnosis by said diagnosing means."

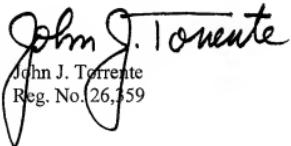
The Fawcett, et al. patent and the Phung, et al. reference therefore fail to teach or suggest applicant's invention of amended claims 11-13, and their respective dependent claims. The Skaanning, et al. reference which was cited for estimating costs fails to add anything to the Fawcett, et al. patent and the Phung, et al. reference to change this conclusion.

In view of the above, it is submitted that applicant's claims, as amended, patentably distinguish over the cited art of record. Accordingly, reconsideration of the claims is respectfully requested.

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Respectfully submitted,

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